



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

LIFE COACH FLÉCHELLE MORIN ANSWERS YOUR RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS.
THIS MONTH: SETTING BOUNDARIES FOR YOUR TEENAGE DAUGHTER;
PUTTING AN END TO DESTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS

Q. I recently discovered my thirteen year old daughter is sending provocative pictures of herself via her cell phone. I am at a complete loss! What would make a young girl want to do something like that? Her mother and I confronted her and tried to explain these pictures will damage her reputation at school, and can come back to haunt her years from now. But she thinks there is nothing wrong with *sexting* and told us 'all her friends do it.' I love my daughter and I don't want her growing up thinking that sex is dirty, but she is way too young to understand—and handle—the consequences of her actions. How can I get through to her?



A. A young teenage girl's need to connect, to be accepted and to conform is what makes *sexting* so appealing. When a young girl gets attention from sexualizing herself, it gives her a sense of power as a woman, no matter how false or deceiving in reality. The reason your daughter doesn't think there is anything wrong with what she is doing is because she doesn't have bad intentions; she simply wants the attention. And unless she gets the attention she craves from you in a loving and healthy way, she will get it the only way she knows how to.

Often, fathers are not as present in their daughters' lives as much as they should be simply because they don't know how. Their daughters go from being little girls to becoming young women, seemingly overnight, leaving

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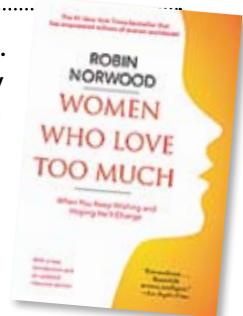
Q. After a year of being together, I broke up with my boyfriend last month. I thought he was so different from all of the other guys I've dated until my girlfriend told me she knew the relationship was doomed to fail because he was 'the same wolf in a different sheep's clothing!' I seem to be picking the same kind of emotionally unavailable guy, unconsciously. How can I stop this destructive pattern and find a nice, normal guy?

A. It's common for women to gravitate towards the same type of man in a love relationship. For instance, if you were in love with a tall, blond guy with blue eyes in your last relationship, you will likely find yourself attracted to tall, blond men with blue eyes in the future. If you were in love with a short, dark-haired man, then you will tend to look for a short, black-haired man in your next relationship. This is a good example of the female brain at work! That being said, your pattern of getting involved with *eternus nocens puer* (Latin for 'eternal bad boys') will only stop when you become conscious in your dating quest.

Here's what I suggest:

First, make a list of the character attributes you do not want in a man. "For example: I don't want a man who is emotionally unavailable; I don't want a man who does drugs; I don't want a man who

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many men uncertain of how to handle the change.

And so they act as if there isn't one.

But this head in the sand stance serves neither fathers nor daughters well in the long run. The truth is, there are many more downsides to not setting boundaries for your teenager than there is to enforcing the protection she needs. So don't be afraid to assert your authority!

Following are a few suggestions to help you re-connect with your daughter and give her the fatherly love and attention she deserves.

Step One. Become the leader: If you don't, she will. Your daughter is spinning out of control and only through your guidance will she learn how to anchor herself in her womanhood. You can either teach your daughter how to be a potent human being and rationally negotiate her way through life or she can grow up to be someone who seduces or intimidates people in order to get what she wants. At thirteen, your daughter needs you to be both a father and a daddy to her now: a father to provide for her, and a daddy to show her the way to a healthy and joyful life. This is the time to be strong and to build solid life rails to protect her.

Step Two. Set boundaries: Inform your daughter that if she doesn't follow your rules, there will be consequences. Forbid

her to send any more sextings and if she does, take away her phone and computer. If she needs a computer to do her homework, disable the internet connection. And when she does need to go online, have her do it in front of you. I guarantee you won't have to take away her rights many times before she understands you mean business.

Step Three. Show your daughter you love her. Make a point to compliment and praise her simply for *being* rather than *doing*. Be present in the moment when you are with her, making her feel like the worthwhile young woman she is. You can also plan some special outings for just the two of you, like a baseball game or fishing trip...or simply going for a walk and an ice cream cone. Show her she can be a significant part of a man's life as a whole and integrated person, not just a one-dimensional sexual being.

Step Four. Be a man of virtue: Be as good as you can be, and then strive to be even better. Teach your daughter that men are as good as women require them to be.

Good luck, dad and have a very happy Father's Day! **UTS**

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is unreliable," and so on and so forth. To help you come to terms with what you truly do not desire in a mate, I suggest you read Dan Kiley's book (if you can find a copy!), "The Peter Pan Syndrome; Men Who Have Never Grown Up." This honest examination of the "adult little boy" who, whether in a relationship or in seeking a relationship, acts out a need for mothering is truly a wake-up call.

Second, make a list of the commitments you are ready to make and keep in order to attract a good man. For example: I will put a profile on three internet dating sites and will go on a minimum of four dates a week; I won't keep dating a man, no matter how charming he is, if I find out he does drugs; I won't be intimate with a man before he has given me a serious commitment such as _____(fill in the

blank with the level of commitment you want), etc. This step is very important. Good men appreciate and value a woman who can make commitments and values herself enough to keep them. For a good book on this subject, pick up a copy of Robin Norwood's "Women Who Love Too Much" which explains why there are no shortcuts when it comes to un-learning our relationship patterns.

Though a process, I believe with sustained discipline and perseverance (I know, I know... easier said than done!), you will discover how to love yourself first, and then be able to share that love with a good man who is worthy of the unique and desirable woman you are.



Fléchelle Morin, Certified ASR Coach, Relationship & Dating to Marriage Coach & Motivational Speaker, is the author of the book, "Kissing or No Kissing; Whom Will you Save Your Kisses For? A Dating Guide to Creating Your Dreams." Have a question or comment for Fléchelle? E-mail her at fléchelle@nokissing.com or visit nokissing.com for more information about Fléchelle's book, dating philosophy or scheduling her as a speaker at your next event. Copyrighted 2009 by Fléchelle Morin